CLAIM OR CLAIMS

I/WE CLAIM:

1. In a computerized patient records system operated for a healthcare institution which maintains clinical guidelines, a method of operating active guidelines comprising the steps of

a) on a guidelines server, maintaining the text of the clinical guidelines and also maintaining, associated with the clinical guidelines, active guideline tags containing codes for actions to be taken by the computerized patient records system;

b) at the station of a user, operating an active guidelines viewer in communication with the guidelines server, the active guidelines viewer including a web browser and an active guidelines interpreter, the web browser displaying the clinical guidelines received from the guidelines server while the active guidelines interpreter processes the active guideline tag to present a hyperlink for the user; and

c) if the user accepts an accessed clinical guideline by invoking the hyperlink, creating an action item from the information in the active guideline tag to be sent to the computerized patient records system for implementation.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the action item in step (c) is issuing a prescription.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the action item in step (c) is order or a procedure to be performed.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the station of the user communicates with the active guidelines server over the internet.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the station of the user communicates with the active guidelines server over the internet.

6. An active guidelines server for use at a healthcare institution, the server including a computer readable storage device programmed to store a data set, the data set on the guidelines server comprising

        text for a set of clinical guidelines for the institution providing recommended
5   courses of action to be taken in response to defined diagnoses or situations; and

        a set of active guideline tags, each active guideline tags associated with at least one clinical guideline, each active guideline tag including the text of a hyperlink which can be displayed for a user to identify the acceptance of the recommendation contained in the clinical guideline and also including information which can be transmitted to a
10 computerized patient record system to cause an action item to be initiated on behalf of the patient.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the action item is issuing a prescription.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein the action item is an order or a procedure to be performed.
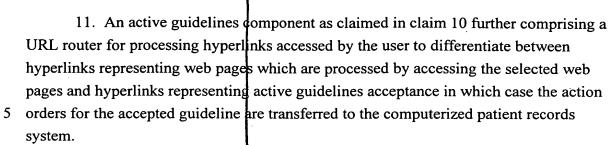
15   9. The method of claim 6 wherein the active guidelines are stored in HTML format.

10. An active guidelines component of a computerized medical records system for use in a healthcare delivery institution having a set of active guidelines stored on a guidelines server, the active guidelines component comprising
20   an active guidelines viewer capable of displaying a web page for a user;

        an active guidelines interpreter capable of processing an active guideline received by the component from the guidelines server to display a clinical guideline for the user and to interpret an active guideline tag received from the guidelines server and display a hyperlink from the tag for the user which the user can use to indicate
25 acceptance of the recommendation contained in the clinical guideline.

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11. An active guidelines component as claimed in claim 10 further comprising a URL router for processing hyperlinks accessed by the user to differentiate between hyperlinks representing web pages which are processed by accessing the selected web pages and hyperlinks representing active guidelines acceptance in which case the action

5   orders for the accepted guideline are transferred to the computerized patient records system.

12. The method of claim 10 wherein the action item is issuing a prescription.

13. The method of claim 10 wherein the action item is an order or a procedure to be performed.